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For Immediate Release: April 15, 2009

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Sullivan Creek Project Negotiation Team Fifth Mediated Session

On April 1 and 2, 2009, the fifth mediated session of the settlement negotiation team for the surrender of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) license for the Sullivan Creek Hydroelectric Project met in Spokane, Washington. The negotiation team, which is made up of a mix of state and federal agencies, non-governmental organizations, the Pend Oreille Public Utility District, local officials, and representatives of the local community, is working with the help of the U.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution to find options for resolving the issues for surrender of the Project license.

At the fifth mediated session, the team discussed how they might best merge some aspects of the Boundary Dam relicensing and Sullivan Creek decommissioning processes. The group recognized the benefits of aligning the timing of both processes so that comprehensive agreement can be made on the future of both projects.

The team is currently working on a draft plan to enhance current Sullivan lake management to better meet recreation, environmental, and PUD ratepayer interests through making adjustments in Sullivan lake flow and regulation. They are also taking into account costs to ratepayers. As part of the draft plan, the team is looking at enhancing the fishery of Sullivan Lake by improving fish nutrients in the lake, fish use of the lake, fish habitat in Harvey Creek, and by reducing loss of fish through the dam.

A lot of data still needs to be collected for the draft plan. Toward that effort, two new team workgroups were formed at the April mediated session: one to look at the best way to manage the bedload/connectivity in Harvey Creek at the south end of the lake; and the other to look at lake and downstream creek temperature issues and to explore hydrologic models to recommend a minimum instream flow in Outlet Creek.

The next mediation session is scheduled for May 6-7, 2009, at the Pend Oreille PUD offices in Newport, Washington. The public is welcome to attend the mediation sessions if they are willing to sign the Observer Agreement. Anyone wishing to attend should notify Gail Brooks at brooks@ecr.gov or (520) 901-8532 so that she can plan the room logistics. A copy of the Observer Agreement is available on the project website and upon request.

Information on the project is available at the project's website: <http://sullivancreek.ecr.gov>.

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